

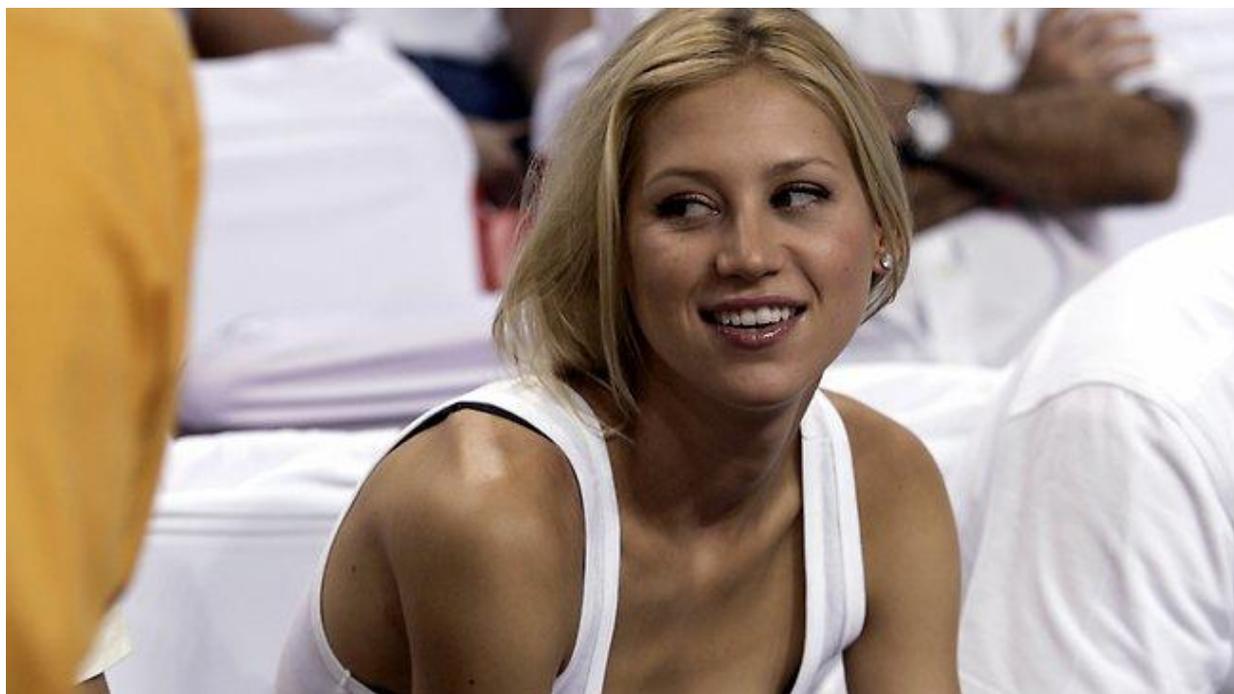
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- The David Allan Column -

A South African happening at Newmarket ... and more in this bag full of mixed content



Anna Kournikova

IN the first leg of the Autumn Double on Saturday at Newmarket, something South African happened. A week before SMART CALL is due to run there in the Sun Chariot.

The event also involved one of the most stunning women ever to play professional sport. —Heritage Handicap|| is the label given to some of the most popular and valuable races in the UK. Along with such as The Ebor at York and The Stewards Cup at Goodwood, two on the list comprise The Autumn Double at Newmarket, a pair of races that for many surpass the others as spectacles and fun betting heats.

The second leg is the 2 mile 2 furlongs (3,600 metres) Cesarewitch Handicap that starts in Cambridgeshire and finishes in Suffolk. The field runs on an L-shaped course starting at the bottom tip of the L, then charges down the 2,000 metres straight on The Rowley Mile. The race name is the anglicised version —Tsesarevich|| who was an early 19th Century fan of Newmarket and later became Tsar Alexander III.



The Charge of the Light Brigade, minus the cannons.

The first leg is the Cambridgeshire Handicap run, as the Cesarewitch, since 1839. This is the Charge of the Light Brigade minus the cannons, over the straight 1 mile 1 furlong (1800m) course. On Saturday, the 31 runners stretched right across the track.

(There will be 28 contenders in the Vaal's new Grand Heritage race on Saturday, which will give you some idea).

The winner SPARK PLUG won well, allowing Mr J L Day to collect ZAR 1.8 million win money with good statutory shares for trainer Brian Meehan, for Meehan's stable staff and for jockey Jimmy Fortune.

For that long-standing team after a lean season, the result was more satisfying because of the "other" across-the-track cavalry charge The Royal Hunt Cup.

Anna Kournikova was the most Googled sports person worldwide in and around the year 2,000. You did not have to enter —"Anna Kournikova Hot". She was always hot.

Although she never won a singles title – probably due to constant photo-shoots – she did win Grand Slam Doubles with Martina Hingis. But at Wimbledon and elsewhere, when Anna Kournikova was practising, that's where the lads would be found. Not watching an actual match.

The Russian Beauty naming link is not hard to identify. Fabergé made the Basket of Flowers Egg in 1901 for Empress Alexandra. It was sold in 1933 by the Soviets to a London dealer for Queen Mary. The present Queen Elizabeth inherited it so it sits in the Royal Collection. Great naming.

In the 2015 renewal at Royal Ascot, SPARK PLUG took a very heavy fall, knocking his confidence, and giving Jimmy fractured vertebrae.

SPARK PLUG is by DYLAN THOMAS one of that clutch of middle distance Danehills, along with DUKE OF MARMALADE and ORATORIO. DYLAN THOMAS won six Group 1s including The Arc, Irish Derby and Irish Champion Stakes twice, once with DUKE OF MARMALADE 2nd. But he was not a successful flat sire and now covers 150 jumping mares at a small but profitable fee.

Nevertheless, he must sire a few good ones – from good mares. SPARK PLUG is out of a South African bred mare: KOURNIKOVA (SAF) by SPORTSWORLD out of FABERGE FLOWERS by RUSSIAN FOX.

KOURNIKOVA (SAF), from the family of HARRY HOTSPUR, once beat IPI TOMBE (ZIM). In Ireland she has bred black type three times – by PEINTRE CELEBRE sire of BYWORD, by JEREMY (coincidentally a Danehill line stallion also better as a jumping sire) and by DYLAN THO-MAS.

This writer has been responsible for importing 70 or 80 fillies and mares into South Africa for breeding. My ambition has always been to move mares the other way as well. KOURNIKOVA proves the potential. An-other mare I bought and manage for a financial investor in UK is producing an IRR of over 30%. She is a granddaughter of KUNDALINI.

Yet where are we? However much the new science proves that AHS poses a minimal risk, goodwill and non-scientist allies are essential to help pressure the un-elected EU set-up.

There may be ambitions to sell SA yearlings and horses with form to countries which may or may not assist a mare's record, but interaction with first rank global breeding is crucial to the quality of our gene pool and SA's future Part 1 status.

Having played a bridge-building role for a couple of years, diffusing argument generated by vets on both sides, writing strategically and creating some willingness to listen amongst people for whom this is not a priority, my services are not currently required by the SA leaders, so I am very careful what I say abroad.

But people automatically talk to me about South Africa and tell me that the issue is actually less about South Africa and more about broader disease control from various would-be exporting countries.

“Come on David, if you had a field full of Frankels, would you vote for it?”. –ttc

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